

The Gull



DEC 15 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 34, No. 11 December 2000

Christmas Bird Counts

The holiday season and end of Y2K is upon us, which means it's time to resume old traditions or start new activities that will last for another century: friendly gatherings, good tidings, and of course, the 101th annual Christmas Bird Counts!!!!!! Let's hope for good weather, lots of birds, and fun fellow birders. If you have made a tradition of participating in local Christmas Bird Counts, join us again; experienced birders really help. If you are looking to finish the first year of the new century with a healthy, social, environmentally friendly activity, join us. Who knows? You might be starting a new tradition in your family that you can carry on each new year. Beginners are always welcome. Golden Gate Audubon Society's 2 counts, Oakland and San Francisco, are well along in preparation.

The Oakland CBC is on Sunday, December 17. Encompassing an area from Point Isabel to south of the Oakland Airport, and from the Bay to Lafayette Reservoir, the Oakland count circle contains a variety of habitats with a good number of species. You can bird for the day with a group or be a feeder watcher in the comfort of your own home.

The San Francisco CBC is on Thursday, December 28. The circle covers the northern San Francisco Peninsula from San Bruno to the Golden Gate. Join a team in one of the areas for a full day of birding; help for a few hours by covering your neighborhood park or square; be a midday birder for a few hours in downtown San Francisco; or bird-watch in your backyard for as little as 30 minutes.

Both counts welcomes more participants, so if you're interested but haven't signed up, phone the appropriate contacts listed below. Folks who let us know early are much appreciated by the compilers! Neither count will be able to place counters at the last minute. If you call after mid-December, some areas may be filled. If you have sent in a form but haven't received an assignment yet, you can expect to hear from us soon. We look forward to seeing you in the field and at the count-day dinner!

Oakland CBC Contacts: Joelle Buffa & Clyde Morris (510) 494-1098

San Francisco CBC Contact: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0985

Our Thanks to Some Good Friends

By Arthur Feinstein

In the past few months, we have received some wonderful grants from some wonderful people and we'd like to take a moment to thank them.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Kern have graciously presented us with \$3,000 for our efforts to help save the California Quail in San Francisco. Bringing a species back to health is no small task, and naturally, it takes a lot of money to do it. This grant starts us on our way. Thanks so much to the Kerns.

The Flora Family Foundation absolutely thrilled us with a

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Field Trips Calendar

**Saturday and Sunday,
December 2 and 3, GRAY
LODGE AND SACRAMENTO
WILDLIFE REFUGES, Glenn,
Sutter, and Butte.**

See November Gull for details.
Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin
(530) 342-6476.

**Sunday, December 3, UC
BOTANICAL GARDENS,
Berkeley, Alameda.**

See November Gull for details.
Leader: Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167,
steveandlil@worldnet.att.net.

**Sunday, December 3,
STRYBING ARBORETUM, SF.**

Meet at 8 am at the front gate of the
Arboretum (9th Ave and Lincoln
Way). See January trip for details.
Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen
McKenna (415) 566-3241.

**Saturday, December 9, UPPER
SAN LEANDRO RESERVOIR,
Moraga, Contra Costa.**

Meet at 9 am in the Valley Vista
Staging Area for this half-day trip.
Take Hwy 24 to Orinda and exit on
Moraga Hwy. Continue about 4 miles
to Canyon Road. Turn right at the
traffic signal and continue 1.2 miles
to the Valle Vista Staging area on the
left. Grassy hills, pines, oaks, and
open water provide varied habitats
for land birds (mainly woodpeckers)
and waterfowl. Beginners welcome.
Rain cancels. Leader: Bob Lewis (510)
845-5001. (*)

**Sunday, December 10,
REDWOOD REGIONAL PARK,
Oakland, Alameda.**

See November Gull for details.
Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936,
rscalf@jps.net.

**Wednesday, December 13,
MINI-TRIP TO LAKE
MERRITT, Oakland.**

Meet at the Rotary Science Center
(Bellvue and Perkins near Grand

Ave) at 9:30 am This is a good oppor-
tunity to review waterfowl. Beginners
welcome. Lunch optional. Rain can-
cels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510)
351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

**Saturday, December 16,
AQUATIC PARK, SAN
FRANCISCO.**

Meet at 9:30 am at the Hyde Street
Pier at Hyde and Jefferson Sts. Join
National Park Ranger Carol Kiser on a
beginner's walk to discover birds
next door to the urban environment.
Wheelchair accessible. (415) 928-1318

**Sunday, December 17,
OAKLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD
COUNT, Alameda.**

See Christmas Bird Count article on
the front page for details.

**Thursday, December 28, SAN
FRANCISCO CHRISTMAS
BIRD COUNT, SF.**

See Christmas Bird Count article on
the front page for details.

**Friday, December 29, SF
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
WRAP-UP!**

Meet at Merrie Way above the Cliff
House at 8 am. We will look for high-
lights found, and species missed, on
the SF Christmas Bird Count. Bring
lunch and liquids. We will bird until
about 3 pm. The itinerary will be
determined at the last minute.
Carpooling would be helpful. Leader:
Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983,
ash@sfo.com (*)

**Sunday, January 7,
SCHOLLENBERGER MARSH,
Petaluma, Sonoma.**

Meet at 8 am at North Berkeley BART
for carpool or 9 am at Schollenberger
for this half-day trip. Take 101 north
to Petaluma. Take the Lakeville Hwy
exit, turn left (east). Turn right on
South McDowell, right on Cader
Lane, and continue to parking lot. We
will look for ducks, rails, and bittern.

Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Jeffery
Black (510) 526-7068.

**Sunday, January 7, STRYBING
ARBORETUM, SF.**

Meet at 8 am at the front gate of the
Arboretum (9th Ave and Lincoln
Way) for this regular first Sunday of
the month half-day trip. The Strybing
Arboretum is a delightful section of
Golden Gate Park, with several
"microhabitats" attracting a varied
array of resident, migrant and
vagrant birds. Beginners and all oth-
ers welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley
and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

**Wednesday January 10,
MINI-TRIP TO ARROWHEAD
MARSH, Alameda.**

Meet at 9:30 am. Take Hwy 880 to the
Hegenberger Rd exit. Turn right
(west) to Doolittle Dr and turn right.

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Donations

**Golden Eagle (\$1,000 or
more)**

David W Hudson

**Peregrine Falcon (\$500 or
more)**

Ruth E. and James M Gravanis, for
Save the Quail Campaign

Clapper Rail (\$100 or more)

Clyde A Morris

In Memorium

Frederick and Jan Willsea in
memory of Marion Fox

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon
Society helps make it possible for us to con-
tinue the good work we do in helping to
preserve our natural world for future gener-
ations. If you are interested in setting up a
bequest we have a team of experts who will
be glad to help you. Please call Arthur
Feinstein at our GGAS Office for more
information. Our phone number is
510-845-2222. Thanks.

A Small Bird and Three Great Men

By Harry Fuller

Hammond's Flycatcher is one of the *Empidonax* species that can be difficult to identify in the field. The species breeds in the mixed coniferous forests of the interior of northern and eastern California. Some individuals are seen each fall passing through the Bay Area on their way south. Here is the story of the discovery of the species by a notorious naturalist, its naming for a second man of deserved fame, and the masterful role played by a third great American naturalist.

Spencer Fullerton Baird (1823–1887) was certainly the most important person in the early history of the Smithsonian Institution. He was 27 years old when he joined the staff in 1850, bringing his extensive collection of natural history specimens. Those formed the original core of the national collection. Baird remained with the Smithsonian his entire life and became head in 1878. Although his work at the Smithsonian kept him away from field work, he used his connections to vastly increase the collections.

Baird was the son-in-law of General Sylvester Churchill. General Churchill was inspector general of the US Army during the crucial period before the Civil War. Thus, Baird got selected doctors with scientific training assigned to cru-

cial military posts and the transcontinental railroad surveys. Each of the medical men with interests in natural history was ordered to collect local flora and fauna and send all the specimens back to Baird at the Smithsonian. Baird, in turn, would supply his field collectors with instruction in taxidermy, storage or shipping containers, and extra whiskey for preservation.

The Hammond's Flycatcher was named for Dr. William Alexander Hammond (1828–1900). Dr. Hammond entered the US Army medical corps in 1849. He is credited with being a brilliant Surgeon General during the Civil War, pushing for higher professional and hygienic standards in the military hospital system. Like many other military men, he came into conflict with Secretary of War Stanton. General Hammond found himself dismissed and court-martialed, being convicted and kicked out of the Army in the midst of the Civil War. In 1878, Congress exonerated General Hammond and restored all his military honors. Meanwhile, Dr. Hammond had built a successful medical and academic career, doing pioneering research in neurology and other fields. He founded a hospital in Washington,

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Spring 2001 Birding Classes in San Francisco

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon Society will be starting February 6, 7, and 8, 2001. All classes meet 7–9:15 pm in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St on the east side of the building.

The instructor co-authored *Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area* and *Birds of Northern California*. He also coordinated the recorded Northern California Birdbox, sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is *A Field Guide to Birds of North America*, 3rd edition, by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior. Part A (EA101) starts February 6 and ends March 20; Part B (EA105) starts March 27 and ends May 15.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of

North American waterbirds, including shorebirds and jaegers. Part A (EA110) starts February 7 and ends March 21; Part B (EA115) starts March 28 and ends May 16.

Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of North American land birds, including sparrows, longspurs, buntings, and grosbeaks. Part A (EA120) starts February 8 and ends March 22; Part B (EA125) starts March 29 and ends May 17.

The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class, if you have them. Fees are \$100 for each 7-week course. Preregistration is strongly advised. For further information call (415) 561-1860.

Joseph Morlan, Pacifica, CA 94044: jmorlan@ccsf.org

California Birding; Mystery Birds:
<http://fog.ccsf.org/~jmorlan/>

California Bird Records Committee:
<http://www.wfo-cbrc.org/cbrc/>

A Birder Looks at Sibley's Guide

By Harry Fuller

The *Sibley Guide to Birds*, written and illustrated by David Allen Sibley. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Knopf. 2000. 544 pages. \$35.

Various experts were quoted in the *New York Times* review of this book. "High-water mark." "Raised the bar." "Quantum leap." "Best single book on North American birds." Big claims, and well-deserved. This book will become your standard reference if you are an American birder. From now on, identification discussions will include assertions that "Sibley shows. . ."

Sibley has made several brilliant and useful innovations and improvements: First, he gives flight profiles of *all* species. Going even further, Sibley shows both top and bottom views of the flying bird. Anybody else remember those days as a beginner, dealing with Peterson's swallows, all drawn from above when you almost always see them from underneath? This is the first guide to clearly show the male Lesser Goldfinch flashing white in his wing when he flies. This kind of clear information will help new and intermediate birders immensely.

Second, this is the first guide to give average length, wingspan, and weight for *every* species. None of us knows how much a passing bird weighs, of course, but it is useful to know that species A is slightly heavier or lighter than a Robin or House Finch.

Third, Sibley's distribution maps (drawn by another artist) are clear and have the usual seasonal color codes. The maps are on the same page as the rest of the species information, an innovation started by the Golden guide but something none of the Peterson guides do. The big cartographic contribution: Sibley puts dots in regions where a species has been seen as a vagrant. In a widely circulated e-mail to birders, Sibley explains, "The idea was to let people

know that if they saw a bluebird, for example, in New York it was overwhelmingly likely to be an Eastern, but Mountain was at least a remote possibility and Western was essentially impossible." His map shows that we westerners are the only ones with a chance at a Rustic Bunting.

Fourth, each section opens with drawings of each species in that section. This allows for quick comparisons and the elimination of obvious mismatches when trying to identify a bird.

Finally and most important, Sibley's guide is absolutely the most thorough single-volume compilation of illustrations of the various molts, color morphs, and regional variations of each species. How thorough? Page 73 contains 8 close-up drawings of faces of the 3 possible white swans in North America. Sibley's pages on the complex gull plumages are easier to use than any I've seen in specialized books devoted to gulls and their kin. His years as a paid hawk counter at Cape May also pay off for his readers. For the highly variable Red-tailed Hawk, there are 46 drawings, including 2 head-on profiles of the species in flight. Sibley presents us 23 drawings of Northern Harrier in various plumages and in flight.

Where variations within a species are less visible, Sibley takes a different approach. The Song Sparrow alone has nearly 30 North American subspecies, so Sibley does not show each and every subspecies. He does illustrate the extremes and describe the geographic variations. For complex species or species clusters like Red Crossbill and Fox Sparrow, he gives added detail. On Fox Sparrow, there are 18 drawings and 5 range maps.

As other reviewers have noted, Sibley's book is too large (at 6 in by 9-1/2 in and over 500 pages) and heavy to fit nicely into a pocket. In the field, it would have to go into a

backpack, making it inconvenient. Nevertheless, most of us will probably take it along in any vehicle that takes us birding. It will become our main field reference.

Sibley's artwork is thrilling in detail and vivid in color. Besides his own quibbles about some of the coloring in the book, the only complaint about the illustration pertains to size. Many of the drawings are 60% to 80% of the same species shown in the National Geographic field guide. There is a lot of white space. This is not universally true because the Least Sandpiper is actually drawn bigger than in the NGS field guide.

This book is highly focused. It is designed to help identify birds seen in the field, any behavioral traits are included for ID purposes. It'll be used for answering "What bird?" If you want to know how a bird lives, eats, breeds, or behaves, you'll need other books. For beginners, it leaves unanswered questions on seasonal abundance, which is handled only in the maps.

Finally, it is great to see Sibley's own attitude toward this book, which he has been planning and working on for much of his life (he's not yet 40 years old). He calls it "a work in progress." In his e-mail, Sibley mentions several things in the new book that he wants to change in later editions: the color of the rufous in some birds, the Clay-colored Sparrow adult is too dark, and the sexual dimorphism of the small accipiters was not shown.

Sibley says, "I encourage any comments and discussion about the book, it can only lead to more knowledge and a better understanding of birds. . . I hope it sparks people to go out and learn lots of new stuff that none of us know now."

It will do just that. This book will inspire and assist all birders, regardless of our current skills.

Great Gift Ideas for the Holidays

Member Discounts for the Sibley Guide to Birds and Other Books/Calendars

Just in time for the holidays, we are offering a \$10 member savings for the much talked-about *Sibley Guide to Birds*. The special member price is \$27.00 including tax. The *NY Times* called this book "a must-have guide for anyone interested in birds." "Far and away the best single book on North American birds," according to Denny Abbott, founding member, American Birding Association. Sibley's more than 6,600 illustrations show nearly every species in flight and species comparisons—extremely helpful in the field.

Our Audubon 2001 calendars and other books are now discounted 10% for members—to show our appreciation to our members and for supporting your own organization. (The member-discounted price, which includes tax, is given in parentheses.)

Looking for one of those stunning Audubon calendars? We have the following:

Audubon Engagement Calendar (\$12.50)

Audubon Songbirds Picture-a-Day Wall Calendar

(\$10.50)

Audubon Wildflowers Wall Calendar (\$10.50)

Some other books on sale at the GGAS office include: *The Birder's Handbook* (\$19.50); *Birds of Northern California* (\$6.00); *Birds of SF and Bay Area* (\$9.50); *Common Dragonflies of California* (\$9.50); *Field List of California Birds* (\$2.00); *Gardening with a Wild Heart* (\$17.50); National Geographic Society's *Birds of North America* – 3rd ed. (\$21.50); Peterson's *Western Birds* (\$17.50); *The California Quail* (\$16.50) and *Wild Birds of California* (this book and its beautiful photos of California's wild birds will make a wonderful Christmas gift, and we're offering it at a special member price of \$17.00).

Many of these books are sold at our monthly member meetings. To buy one of them, please call the office at (510) 843-222 to confirm that we have a copy of the book or calendar and, if you decide to come by the office, whether someone will be there. If you prefer to have your order mailed to you, please add an additional \$5 charge for shipping and handling.

The Beginner's Birding Library

- Either the National Geographic *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* or Peterson Field Guides: *Western Birds*. One of these you carry with you in the field, write in the margins, and keep track of details you note that are not called out by the field guide, habitat information, so forth.

- *Lives of North American Birds* by Kenn Kaufman. This book is too heavy to carry afield. Use it as a home reference, to be studied when you are curious about a bird you've seen. It contains information on breeding, eating, and other behaviors of species you encounter.

- *Sibley's Guide to the Birds*. This is another book you will likely leave at home or in your backpack. It is the first place you will turn to identify that problematic bird or to confirm your ID on an unfamiliar species or one with worn plumage.

- *Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area*. Chris Fisher and Joseph Morlan. Good description of given of locally common species and when and where to expect them. Good charts show seasonal abundance of each species.

- *Birds of Northern California*. David Fix and Andy Bezener. This has useful regional distribution maps and the species descriptions are longer than you get in field guides. Good information on behavior and habitat is provided.

- *Birding Northern California*. John Kemper. Gives directions to birding sites and what species to expect when you get there.

- *The Complete Birder*. Jack Connor. East Coast-oriented but well written and highly informative and especially good in helping differentiate species within difficult groups. It has humor, which is hard to find in good bird books.

- *Birding in the American West*. Kevin J. Zimmer. This book is big on the little things, with detailed written descriptions of differences among similar shorebirds or hawks and nearly 50 pages on gull identification. Do not give this book to a nervous beginner, but it's great for the eager intermediate. Also, it tells where to find western specialty species.

TELESCOPE FOR SALE Fine condition Celestron C90 telescope with its own case. Excellent for bird-watching (image right side up), starwatching, photography.. Valued at \$400. Proceeds go to send binoculars through Golden Gate Audubon's Latin America Committee to deserving locally run bird conservation projects in Panama and Mexico. 510-237-7976 eves.

Our Thanks ...

Continued from page 1

\$50,000 grant. Half of the grant money will be used to help protect the California Least Tern colony located in Alameda. With that money, we will be able to help the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) undertake such necessary management tasks as weed removal (raptors use weeds to perch on before attacking the Least Terns, and mammals hide behind weeds) and predator control (hawks and falcons eating the Least Terns are caught and relocated).

The cost for weed removal and predator control on such extensive acreage (565 acres) far exceeds \$25,000, but this at least gives us a start.

The USFWS, the agency that will manage the area once it is a National Wildlife Refuge, doesn't have enough money now to do all these things, and because the Navy has yet to transfer the property to the Service, it's difficult to get Congress to appropriate money for the Alameda

Refuge. We hope the transfer will finally take place in February. Thanks to the Flora Family Foundation, we will now be able to help the Service achieve these management needs in the interim. In addition, we hope that this substantial donation and indication of public concern for the Least Terns will convince the USFWS to release more dollars for this oh-so-important Least Tern colony.

The other half of the Flora Family Foundation money will be used to further our Alameda Education program. The future of the Least Tern colony and the Alameda Refuge where it resides is completely dependent on the goodwill of its neighboring human community. Through our education program, we are helping to instill in the Alameda community a sense of pride and stewardship for the future Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and its Least Tern colony.

Thank you to the Flora Family Foundation for helping us take a giant step forward in protecting this endangered bird, the California Least Tern.

A Small Bird... *Continued from page 3*

DC, for the treatment of mental disorders. Hammond also wrote several plays and novels.

Early in his career, in 1855, Dr. Hammond served at Fort Riley, Kansas, where he collected animal and plant specimens for Baird and the Smithsonian. An enlisted man at Ft. Riley was interested in natural history and Dr. Hammond encouraged him. That man was Janos (John) Xantus.

The pair sent more than two dozen bird species to Baird, including Carolina Parakeet, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Oregon Junco. Xantus (1825-1894) became a notorious but accomplished naturalist, thanks to this chance service with Dr. Hammond.

A Hungarian emigre, Xantus fled his native country after taking part in the unsuccessful nationalistic revolt against the Austrian Empire in 1848. An educated man with no money but great ambitions, he wrote grandiose accounts of his American exploits. These were published in Hungary where he became widely read and famous. His own letters make Private Xantus sound like he was in charge. He repeatedly talks of being in command of Dr. Hammond, whom he acknowledged as a close friend! Despite the fact that he plagiarized other travel accounts of the American West, lied about himself, and always claimed to be superior to those around him, Xantus did great work for Baird and the Smithsonian. Lies? Xantus once had a photo taken of himself as a US Navy captain, which was published in Hungary. Xantus never served in the Navy.

Before Dr. Hammond was transferred out of Ft. Riley, Xantus began corresponding with Baird. In 1857, Baird had Xantus sent to a new military post in California: Fort Tejon. Here Xantus spent 20 months, complaining that his military duties limited his field work. However, the specimens he sent to Baird included more than 130 bird species. Three of them were new to science: Spotted Owl, Cassin's Vireo, and the flycatcher Xantus named for his friend, Dr.

Hammond.

Based on Xantus's bitter complaints about Army life, Baird got him placed in the Coast Survey. His new job: to take tidal measurements at Cabo San Lucas, Baja California, and to collect specimens for Baird. Xantus did the collecting well, but was let go by the Coastal Survey for botching tidal measurements during his assignment, which ended in 1862. New species he collected in Mexico were Xantus's Murrelet, Xantus's Hummingbird, and Gray Thrasher. Again he sent 130 species to Baird.

Xantus's final assignment in the New World was a consular post in Manzanillo, for which both Hammond and Baird wrote glowing recommendations. Again he collected many specimens for Baird, but Xantus lasted only 6 months in this job before being dismissed. He then returned to Hungary, where he was made head of the Budapest Zoo.

Baird once described Xantus thus: "the most accomplished and successful explorer in the field of natural history I have ever known or ever heard of."

One biographer wrote of Dr. Hammond that he was "a man of fine presence, winning personality and splendid physique—he was a striking military figure. His powerful voice, pleasing delivery, and flow of language made him a popular speaker. . . . Hammond must be reckoned as one of the greatest of Surgeon Generals of the United States Army."

A Baird biographer described him at the Smithsonian: "He became the consummate collector, and when more demanding responsibilities intruded upon his direct involvement in collecting and classifying, he became a collector of collectors. Under his training and guidance virtually all the major natural scientists of the nineteenth century developed their enthusiasms and their professional competence."



Book Review

By Janice Andersen

Scott Weidensaul, *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere With Migratory Birds*, North Point Press, 1999.

Living on the Wind is an important book for birders curious about where those spring and fall migrants are coming from and going to, those with bird feeders wanting to know what happens to their feathered friends part of the year, and conservationists interested in the Big Picture.

Scott Weidensaul, a columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and a bird bander, has compiled all the latest information on the important topic of avian migration. His bibliography is impressive. He not only did his research well, he traveled—to Mexico, Argentina, the Copper River Delta in Alaska, the Platte River in Kansas, Bombay Hook in Cape May, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania, and to California, spending time with Debi Shearwater, going out on boat trips, and being squired around to birding hot spots of central California.

This book, written in a lively and engaging manner, is packed with fascinating facts. It's a mind-boggling story of the awesome and prodigious movements of these tiny critters—some weighing barely an ounce—tale upon tale of life-and-death journeys over thousands of miles. And occurring twice a year! The question running through the reader's mind throughout is How? How do they do it? How does the Blackpoll Warbler, for instance, fly thousands of miles over several days without stopping until it reaches the Arctic bushes to breed? One theory is that it evolved this strategy during the last ice age to fly over the glaciers that reached as far south as Iowa. That tells us possibly why, but it doesn't tell us HOW.

Here are just some of the stories: The Sooty Shearwater, a ubiquitous seabird off the West Coast through much of the year, breeds "by the millions" along the coasts of Chile, New Zealand, and Tasmania. Every year several million are seen moving up and down our coasts as they go from sub-antarctic to subarctic waters and back again. Despite their incredible numbers, they are potentially at risk because every year 50,000 chicks are taken from their nest burrows on one of the Pacific islands for food and fishing bait, a practice that could eventually lead to a population crash.

Many of us have heard the story about the Arctic Tern, which may be the longest-distance migrant because it breeds in the high northern latitude and "winters" in the extreme south, meaning it enjoys more daylight in its life than any other animal on earth. But did you know that every year it traverses a figure-of-8 of 22,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean?

One of the most exciting stories in this fascinating book is in the chapter, "Rivers of Hawks." Most Audubon members are familiar with the story of the discovery of the hawk migration along the ridges of the Appalachians and

how early conservationists banded together to stop the slaughter of thousands of hawks as they flew low along the ridges. Now people "flock" to the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania every fall to witness this spectacular movement of raptors where, on a "miracle day" in the 1970s, 21,000 Broad-winged Hawks were counted flying over. Many of us have also heard of the massive flights of hawks, eagles, and vultures over Panama and Eilat, Israel, where nearly a million hawks a year pass by. In Veracruz, Mexico, a Mexican hawk enthusiast from an early age, Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza, grew up realizing that his home state was also an important hawk-migrating area. Getting others around the world to listen to him was another story. But he persevered in obtaining funding and organizing counts, and the author, who was one of the first to join him for this path-breaking adventure, describes what they found. How it must have felt when the astounding facts emerged: that every hawk in North America funnels down this relatively narrow, flat region every fall on its way south! Since these counts began, 3 million raptors have been counted each fall, including about 1.5 million Broad-wings, 1/2 million Swainson's hawks, and 1.2 million vultures. The story of this discovery is an exciting one, and Weidensaul does an excellent job of describing the utter frustration, sinking feeling, and sheer wonder of looking up at a kettle of hawks that he realizes contains at least 10,000 raptors!—and knowing he's expected to get an accurate count as, out of the corner of his eye, birds are zooming past. Any of you who've done shorebird censuses will recognize that feeling ("Ohmygosh, where do I start?"). It is now clear that the largest hawk migration in the world goes through the state of Veracruz, important information that can be used to fuel conservation efforts.

Are the number of birds declining? Well, yes and no. Some birds, like Canada and Snow geese, are increasing so rapidly that they have become a massive management problem. Others, like Olive-sided Flycatcher and Wood Thrush (to name just 2), clearly seem to be in decline, but is it permanent or a "natural" ebb and flow? For many birds, we really don't know how many are out there and the problems they're facing—forest fragmentation; rampant urban and suburban development; increased populations of predators like ravens, raccoons, and feral house cats; polluted oceans; decreased or drained or mowed-down habitat on either breeding or wintering grounds; global warming, with the warming of our oceans affecting the food source of pelagic species or the northern forests (will they be able to move north in time before they die out

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September 30–October 30, 2000

The period had highly changeable weather, ending dramatically with a wild, dry wind-storm on the weekend of October 21 and followed by heavy rain during the last week of the month. Nine California Rare Bird Committee-reviewable species were sighted, and many county records were set, but the number of unusual wood warblers increased only slightly over last month.

Albatross to Scoters

About 40 Black-footed Albatross were sighted on pelagic trips during the period, with a high count of 12 on an Oct 1 Bodega Canyon, SON, outing (DLSh), and 1 was spotted from shore on an Oct 21 Pigeon Point, SM, seawatch (RSTh). High count for Pink-footed Shearwaters was 58 on a Monterey Bay, MTY, pelagic trip Oct 1 (LL, KMcG); about 60 more were found on other pelagic outings; and 34 were counted during Pigeon Point seawatches Oct 14 & 21 (RSTh). Two Pink-footed Shearwaters seen from the Cliff House, SF, Oct 28 may have been blown in with the storm (KM). One Flesh-footed Shearwater was sighted on each of 2 Monterey Bay trips Oct 4 & 18 (MPRBA), and 2 more were found on an Oct 29 Monterey Bay trip (DLSh). A total of 12 Short-tailed Shearwaters were reported, 8 from the Oct 7 Monterey Bay outing (LL, KM, DLSh), and 4 on an Oct 15 Santa Cruz boat trip (JG). Two **Manx Shearwaters** (*Puffinus puffinus*) were found during the period, 1 on each of 2 Monterey Bay trips Oct 10 & 29 (DLSh). Three Least Storm-Petrels were reported, 2 on an Oct 10 Monterey Bay trip (DLSh) and the other on the Oct 15 Santa Cruz trip (JG).

A **Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*) was on the Farallones, SF, Oct 22 (PRBO), the third this fall in that location. An unusual site was that of a Magnificent Frigatebird chasing a Red-tailed Hawk at Waddell Creek, SCZ, Oct 27 (BW). Not often seen near the coast was a White-faced Ibis at Limantour Pond, PRNS, MRN, Oct 23 (JE). At least 150 White-fronted Geese were found at coastal locations over Alameda, Marin, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz counties and the Farallones. Two Ross's Geese were at Pinto Lake, SCZ, Oct 20 (CK). A Brant, rare in San Francisco Bay, was at Foster City, SM, Oct 9 (PJM). A few Tundra Swans were reported at Eureka, HUM, Oct 2 (ABB). A Eurasian Wigeon at SE Farallon Island, SF ~Oct 7–10, was a 2nd island record (PRBO). Another was at Crab Cove, ALA, Oct 21 (AF). Harlequin Ducks numbered 16–21 off Glass Beach, MEN, Oct 9–21 (DT, ABB); and 2 were at King Salmon, HUM, Oct 9 (ABB). A rare inland location for 2 Black Scoters was Lake Tahoe, ED, Oct 9 (KS).

Hawks to Alcids

A **Common Black-Hawk** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*), normally found in Mexico, southern Arizona, and New Mexico, was reported from Willowside Creek, SON, Oct 14 (LH). This species is exceedingly rare in California, with only 2 records from southern California (Small, 1994). A Broad-winged Hawk flew over Mount Madonna Rd, SCZ, Oct 1 (DSu), and a Swainson's Hawk, rare on the coast in October, was over Bolinas, MRN, Oct 26 (KH). Surprising was the sight of a Golden Eagle over Market and Church Sts, SF, Oct 18 (KM), and over Green and Divisadero

Sts, SF, Oct 19 (ASH). A Sandhill Crane sighted over Ano Nuevo, SCZ, Oct 22, was a 2nd or 3rd county record (JGi, RG).

Pacific Golden-Plovers were found in their usual PRNS, MRN, locations, with 4 at the Spaletta Plateau Oct 3 (AKr) and 3 at Nunes Ranch Oct 15 (SD). Another of that species was found at Schoellenberger Park, SON, Oct 29 (RL). A Snowy Plover at Crissy Field, SF, Oct 25 was the 142nd species recorded since the restoration of that site (JC). A **Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*) was reported at Goose Lake, MOD, Oct 14 (JT). This godwit species is a fall transient and a bird of Canada and Alaska, with normal migration routes through the Northeast in the fall. The Stilt Sandpiper at Harkins Slough, SCZ, Oct 1 through at least Oct 26, was a 3rd county record (JP, RW, DSu, MOB). Another Stilt Sandpiper was at the ponds near State & Spreckles, Alviso, SCL, Oct 1–7 (BU, MD, MOB). A Ruff continued at that location Oct 1–7 (BU, MD), and another was at Harkins Slough, Oct 12–17 (RW, AD, MPRBA).

At least 16 South Polar Skuas were reported on a series of pelagic trips during the period. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) returned to State & Spreckles, SCL, Oct 8 (JMa), for its 6th winter. A younger Lesser Black-backed Gull returned to Lake Cunningham, SCL, Oct 29 (MR) for its 4th winter. A 1st-winter Sabine's Gull was seen off the Great Hwy, SF, Oct 4 (KM), and another was spotted on SF Bay near Mariner's Point, Oct 28 (AD). A juvenile Arctic Tern was at Lake Merced, SF, Oct 23–28 (RS, BF, HF). Nine Black Skimmers were seen at the shoreline at the end of N San Antonio Rd, SCL,

Oct 21 (AR). Unusual close to shore was a Rhinoceros Auklet at Coyote Pt, SM, Oct 9 (RSTh).

Doves to Wood Warblers

A White-winged Dove was found at the Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept 30–Oct 1 (KHi, ES), where a Chimney Swift was seen Oct 8 (RS). Another Chimney Swift was on the SE Farallon Island, SF, ~Oct 7–10 (PRBO, JC). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Anderson Marsh State Park, LAK, Oct 10–11, was reported to be a 2nd county record (JW, DW), and a Red-naped Sapsucker was identified at Byrne Forest Reserve, SCZ, Oct 28 (fide DSu). The rarely seen Pileated Woodpecker inhabiting Joaquin Miller Park, ALA, surfaced again Oct 15 (ML). Nine Least Flycatchers were described during the period: 1 at Bodega Bay, SON, Oct 6–9 (DN, DS, RL) was a 4th county record; another was on private property, PLA, Oct 10 (TE); and 5 others were at the SE Farallon Island, SF, ~Oct 7–10 (PRBO, JC). Five Hammond's Flycatchers were at Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS), SCL, Sept 30 (LC). At least 24 reports of Tropical Kingbirds were received during the period, over Lake, Mendocino, Marin, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz counties, with the 1 at Clearlake State Park, LAK, Oct 6, reported to be a 1st county record (DW fide JW).

It was a good month for vireos. A Plumbeous Vireo was found at University of California, Santa Cruz Upper Campus, SCZ, Oct 24 (JGi). There were 3 reports of single **Blue-headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*): at Moss Landing, MTY, Oct 2 (MPRBA); at Fairhaven, HUM, Oct 7 (ABB), and at SE Farallon Island, SF, ~Oct 7–10 (PRBO). Philadelphia Vireos turned up in 3 places as well: Novato, MRN, Oct 4 (RS); Mt Vision Rd, PRNS, MRN, Oct 7 (CC); and SE Farallon Island, SF, ~Oct. 7–10 (PRBO). **Yellow-green Vireo** (*Vireo flavoviridis*) also came in 3's, with 1 at Montero, SM, Oct 5 (AJ, MSp); another near San Gregorio Creek, SM, Oct 6 (RSTh); and a 3rd near the Carmel R mouth, MTY, Oct 14–17 (SRv, MPRBA). This species was recently split from the Red-eyed

Vireo, as mentioned last month, and is being more commonly reported in the fall in our state. A Red-eyed Vireo appeared at Andrew Molina State Park (AMSP), MTY, Oct 10 (MPRBA).

Unusual for the coast were 2–3 Clark's Nutcrackers at Hawk Hill, MRN, Oct 18–23 (JC, JE), and 2 more of that species were seen at AMSP, MTY, Oct 23 (GSC). Two Yellow-billed Magpies seen Sept 21–23 off Hecker Pass Rd, SCZ, were the 1st reported from Santa Cruz since 1988 and only the 2nd modern record there (DSu). An American Dipper was found in an unusual lowland location on Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, Oct 7–8 (SHo, PG). There was a Brown Thrasher at CCFS, SCL, Sept 30 (LC), and 2 Red-throated Pipits were reported from the SE Farallon Is, SF, ~Oct 7–10 (PRBO). A Phainopepla ventured near the airport in Santa Clara, SCL, Oct 21 (UOb). No California Bird Records Committee-reviewable wood warbler species were reported this month, but 2 lists that were omitted due to space limitations were those of 34 Palm and 23 Blackpoll Warblers.

Tanagers to Finches

Two Summer Tanagers were seen, 1 near Fort Miley, SF, Oct 5 (MU, KM, JWi), and the other near Monterey Airport, MTY, Oct 27–30 (MPRBA). A **Cassin's Sparrow** (*Aimophila cassinii*), normally found in the South-Central US and Mexico, was identified on the Farallones, SF, ~Oct 10 (PRBO). Most records of this extremely rare fall transient have been from the Farallones (Small, 1994). An American Tree Sparrow was at Aptos, SCZ, Oct 3 (KP). Twelve Clay-colored Sparrows were in northern California over the period, in Marin, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Yolo counties and the Farallones, with 5 of them seen on the Farallones and the rest being individual sightings. The Clay-colored Sparrow found at UC Davis Oct 25 was a 1st Yolo County record (SH). A Brewer's Sparrow was near Corralitos, SCZ, Oct 1 (DSu), and another at the mouth of Pilarcitos Creek, SM, Oct 1 (RSTh) makes a total of 6 reported in San Mateo so far this fall, a county record. Other individual

Brewer's Sparrows were seen: on ~Oct 3–6 at the SE Farallon Island, SF (PRBO); at Muir Beach, MRN, Oct 3 (DMcK); a bird banded at Carmel Middle School, MTY, Oct 20 (MPRBA); and another on Panoche Valley Rd, SBT, Oct 22 (DLSh). Two Vesper Sparrows were at Half Moon Bay, SM, Oct 8 (RSTh), and 4 Lark Buntings were on W Butte Rd, SUT, Oct 6 (JS), with another on Little Panoche and BLM Rds, SBT, Oct 22 (DLSh). A Grasshopper Sparrow on Road 69, GLE, Oct 6 was a 1st county record (JS). Single Swamp Sparrows were along Minor Hole Rd, MEN, Oct 17 (DLSh); at Majors Creek, SCZ, Oct 19 (CE); and at Harkins Slough, SCZ, Oct 27 (MS, BS, JA). A total of 18 White-throated Sparrows were reported over Contra Costa, Humboldt, Mendocino, Marin, Monterey, San Francisco, and Santa Cruz counties and the Farallones.

A McCown's Longspur was at North Beach Turnoff, PRNS, MRN, Oct 5 (RS). Up to 4 Lapland Longspurs were at the same location Oct 5–15 (SD), and single birds were at Sierra Rd, SCL, Oct 7 (MR, MM); at Pillar Pt, SM, Oct 9 (PJM); at Nicholas & Brewer Rds, PLA, Oct 10 (TE); and in Half Moon Bay, SM, Oct 29 (RSTh). Individual Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at Nicholas & Brewer Rds, PLA, Oct 10 (TE); at SE Farallon Island, SF, ~Oct 7–10 (PRBO); near Chimney Rock, PRNS, MRN, Oct 11 (PG); and in Half Moon Bay, SM, Oct 22 (RSTh).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was on the SE Farallon Island, SF, ~Oct 5–6, and a Blue Grosbeak was there ~Oct 7–10 (PRBO). An Indigo Bunting visited the Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Oct 15 (SD). The plethora of **Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*) continues! One was banded at CCFS, SCL, Sept 30 (LC), and an immature bird was found at Natural Bridges State Park, SCZ, Oct 4–5 (JGi, CCu, SGe). These make a total of 8 Painted Bunting reports this fall, an amazing number. A Dickcissel was found at Carmel R mouth, MTY, Oct 21 (MPRBA), and several Bobolink reports were

Continues on page 11

Wood Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Oct 7	San Lorenzo R, SCZ	DSu
Oct 5-7	PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse	RH, JR, SHo, MOB
~Oct 7-10	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 14	Abandoned Ranch, PRNS, MRN	JBe

Nashville Warbler

Oct 1(2)	Carmel River mouth, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 2	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	MS, JA
~Oct 3-6	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 3	Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN	RS
Oct 7	San Lorenzo R, SCZ	DSu
Oct 8	F Ranch, PRNS, MRN	RS
Oct 11	North Lake, GGP, SF	HC
Oct 11	AMSP, BSOL, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 17	Middle Lake, GGP, SF	KM
Oct 17	Minor Hole Rd, MEN	DLSh
Oct 19	Carmel R mouth, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 22	Casserly Creek, SCZ	DSu
Oct 29(2)	Pine Lake, SF	RF

Virginia's Warbler

Sept 20	Junipera Serra County Park, SM	AD
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Lucy's Warbler

Oct 5	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	KP
Oct 3-4	Santa Clara, SCL	MM, JR
~Oct 3-6	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 5	Big Sur Headlands, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 11	Pescadero Creek, SM	RSTh

Northern Parula

Oct 11	Gazos Creek Rd, Pescadero, SM	RSTh
Oct 20	Battery Wallace, MRN	JC

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Sept 30	Mt Davidson, SF	PS
Sept 30	Gazos Creek, Pescadero, SM	RSTh
Sept 30-Oct 11	Pescadero Creek, SM	RSTh
Oct 1-9	Carmel R mouth, MTY	MPRBA

MTY

Oct 5	AMSP, MTY	JB
Oct 5	Big Sur River mouth, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 9	UCSC Arboretum, SCZ	JGi
Oct 13-15	Laguna Grande Park, MTY	MPRBA, SRv

Magnolia Warbler

Oct 3	PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse	AKr
Oct 5-10 (1-2)	AMSP, MTY	JB, MPRBA
Oct 5-6	PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse	RH, JR
~Oct 7-10	SE Farallon Is, SF	PRBO
Oct 11	BSOL, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 17	Pacific Grove, MTY	ST
Oct 28	BSOL, MTY	MPRBA

Black-throated Blue Warbler

~Oct 3-6	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 7	PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse	RH
Oct 8	Lincoln Park, GGNRA, SF	IS
Oct 16	Zayante Creek, SCZ	DSu

Black-throated Green Warbler

~Oct 3-6	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 15	Carmel R, MTY	CT, LC

Blackburnian Warbler

Oct 2-9	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	MS, JA, JGi, MOB
Oct 3-7	Cloverdale & Pescadero Rds, SM	RSTh
~Oct 3-6	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 5	Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN	RS
Oct 6	PRNS Lighthouse, MRN	JR
Oct 6-10	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	TN, AK, MPRBA
Oct 8	Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN	RH
Oct 11	Laguna Grande Park, MTY	SRv
Oct 11(2)	Pescadero Creek, SM	RSTh

Prairie Warbler

Oct 4-9	Carmel R mouth, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 5	AMSP, MTY	JB
Oct 5	Big Sur Headlands, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 7	Fairhaven, HUM	ABB
Oct 21	Carmel R mouth, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 21-22	Capitola, SCZ	DSu

Black-and-white Warbler

Sept 30-Oct 7	Pescadero Creek, SM	RSTh
Oct 2	Pajaro R, SCZ & SBT	DSu
Oct 2	Moss Landing, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 3	Stage Rd,	RSTh

Oct 5(2)	Pescadero, SM	JB
Oct 5	AMSP, MTY	MPRBA
~Oct 7-10	Big Sur Headlands, MTY	PRBO
Oct 10	SE Farallon Island, SF	MPRBA
Oct 14	AMSP, MTY	AE
Oct 21-25	Gazos Creek Rd, Pescadero, SM	RSTh
	Pescadero Creek, SM	RSTh

American Redstart

Oct 1	Pacific Grove, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 1-5	Carmel R mouth, MTY	MPRBA
~Oct 3-6 (2)	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 5	PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse	RH
Oct 7	Liddell Creek, SCZ	DSu
Oct 7	Pescadero Creek, SM	RSTh
~Oct 7-10 (3)	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 19	Carmel R, MTY	RW, RFo
Oct 21	Capitola, SCZ	DSu
Oct 21	Middle Lake, GGP, SF	KM

Prothonotary Warbler

~Oct 3-6	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 15	Schwann Lake, SCZ	JGi, AS
Oct 14	Bodega Bay, SON	LN
Oct 19	Carmel R mouth, MTY	MPRBA

Ovenbird

~Oct 3-6 (2)	SE Farallon Island, SF	PRBO
Oct 23	UCSC Upper Campus Reserve, SCZ	JD

Northern Waterthrush

Oct 8-9	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	SRv
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Connecticut Warbler

Oct 1	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	AK
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Hooded Warbler

Oct 13-17	Pacific Grove, MTY	LC, ST, SRv
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Canada Warbler

Oct 1	BSOL, MTY	MPRBA
Oct 3	Phipps Ranch, Pescadero SM	RSTh
Oct 17	Moss Landing, MTY	MPRBA

Abbreviations for Observers: JA, Jean Adams; ABB, Arcata Bird Box; JBe, Jim Best; JB, Jim Booker; KB, Ken Burton; RC, Roy Carlson; LC, Les Chibana; JC, Josiah Clark; CC, Chris Corben; HC, Hugh Cotter; CCu, Cindy Cummings; SD, Steven Davies; JD, Jeff Davis; GD, Gary Deghi; MD, Matthew Dodder; AD, Al De Martini; TE, Todd Easterla; AE, Al Eisner; CE, Chris Emmons; JE, Jules Evans; RE, Rich Ferrick; AF, Anthony Fisher; BF, Brian Fitch; RFO, Rick Fournier; HF, Harry Fuller; SGe, Steve Gerow; JGi, James Gilroy; PG, Phil Gordon; JG, Jennifer Green; RG, Rudy Gutierrez; SH, Steve Hampton; KH, Keith Hansen; RH, Roger Harshall; KHi, Kevin Hintsa; SHo, Steve Holzman; ASH, Alan S.

Hopkins; LH, Lisa Hug; AJ, Al Jaramillo; CK, Clay Kempf; AK, Anna Kopitov; AKr, Andy Krater; RL, Rick Lebadour; LL, Leslie Lieurance; ML, Martha Lowe; MM, Mike Mammoser; MOB, Many Observers; JMa, John Mariani; KMcG, Kristin McGee; DMcK, Dave McKenzie; KM, Kevin McKereghan; PJM, Peter J. Metropulos; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; DM, Dan Murphy; DN, Dan Nelson; TN, Todd Newberry; LN, Linda Nicoletti; KP, Kenneth Petersen; PRBO, Point Reyes Bird Observatory; IP, Iff Polken; RR, Richard Redmond; JR, Jean Richmond; AR, Allan Ridley; MR, Mike Rogers; SRv, Steve Rovell; IS, Ivan Samuels; PS, Paul Saraceni; BS, Barb Schafenstein; MS, Michelle Scott; ES, Emily Serkin; DS, Doug Shaw; DLSH, Debra Love Shearwater; MSp, Mike Spillbee; GSC, George St. Clair; RS, Rich Stallcup; BSt, Brad Stam; JS, John Sterling; KS, Kim Steurer; AS, Andy Stone; DSu, David Suddjian; CT, Chris Tenney; ST, Scott Terrill; RStH, Ron S. Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; JT, John Torchay; BU, Bob Ulvang; MU, Myra Ulvang; UOb, Unknown Observer; BW, Brian Walton; JW, Jerry White; JWi, Jay Withgott; RW, Roger Wolfe; DW, Dave Woodward.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others:

ALA, Alameda; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Lab; COL, Colusa; ED, El Dorado; GLE, Glenn; GGP, Golden Gate Park; GGNRA, Golden Gate National Recreation Area; HUM, Humboldt; LAK, Lake; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MOD, Modoc; MTY, Monterey; PLA, Placer; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SBT, San Benito; SE, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SON, Sonoma; SUT, Sutter.

Observations ...

Continued from page 9

received: 1 at Moss Landing, MTY, Oct 7 (KP, MPRBA); 2 at the SE Farallon Island ~Oct 3-6 and another ~Oct 7-10 (PRBO); and 2 at Half Moon Bay, SM, Oct 8 (RStH). Lake Merced, SE, had a Yellow-headed Blackbird, unusual for the location, Oct 9-10 (RF, BSt, RC). Lake Merced, SE, also hosted a 1st-year female Great-tailed Grackle Oct 2-23 (DM, HF, GD, MOB). The Maxwell Sewage Ponds, COL, had up to 11 of this spreading species early in October (JS, RR); and 12-14 were at Laguna Grande Park, MTY, near Roberts Lake where they first bred last year (LC, SRv, ST, MOB), not to mention 3 more at Springs Rd and Pacheco Blvd, MER, Oct 16 (PJM). An Orchard Oriole was at the SE Farallon Island, SE, ~Oct 7-10 (PRBO), and 3 Baltimore Orioles were reported: at PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse, Sept 29-Oct 10 (RH, KB, SHo, MOB); at F Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Oct 8 (RS); and at Big Sur Headlands, MTY, Oct 7 (MPRBA). Finally, a Cassin's Finch, rare on the coast, was identified in the Presidio, SE, Oct 22 (KM, ASH).

Book Review ...

Continued from page 7

from the heat?)—ot to mention the erratic weather patterns caused by global warming that can hamper songbirds' flight across the Gulf of Mexico. In some parts of the world, like our Bay Area where Golden Gate Audubon, with other environmental organizations, has worked long and hard to get back some of the region's historic wetlands, the story is a positive one. But there's still much to learn about the problems birds face, particularly migratory species, and books like Weidensaul's are as important for the questions it raises as for the revelation of what we know and are still learning. Weidensaul shows just how awesomely complex a topic this is and why it's important to try to understand the role of our bioregion in the Big Picture.

But this is not a tale of doom and gloom. It's beautifully written and hard to put down. And I challenge you to try to read the whole thing without uttering at least one "Wow"!

Field Trips Calendar ...

Continued from page 2

Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. After 1 block, turn left into the MLK Jr Regional Shoreline and continue to the last parking lot. Beginners welcome. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie-Spoelman.

Saturday January 13, PALO ALTO BAYLANDS, Santa Clara.

Meet at 8 am. Take Hwy 101 to south of Palo Alto; exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the airport and the Baylands Nature Center. Continue beyond the airport to the duck pond (on the left) and park at the east end. Bring lunch, scope, and clothes appropriate for rain and

mud. We should see waterfowl, rails, and shorebirds. Trip will end midafternoon. Beginners welcome. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074, murphsf@worldnet.att.net (*)

Sunday January 14, CRISSY FIELD, GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA, SAN FRANCISCO.

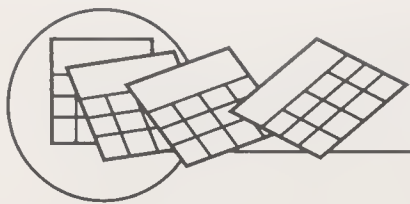
Meet at 8 am in the parking lot at the northeast end of Crissy Field. The Crissy Field Wetland has been open to the tides just over 1 year. We will note all the changes from last year's field trip while looking for loons, grebes, cormorants, herons, shorebirds, and ducks. This half-day trip is great for beginners. To reach Crissy Field, take Van Ness St (101 North), turn left onto Bay St, and then right

onto Laguna St (which becomes Marina Blvd). Continue along Marina and from the right lane go straight into the Presidio onto Mason St and turn right into the marked parking lot. Leader Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0985, ash@sfo.com

Plan ahead: January 20, Sandhill Cranes and Delta with Harry Fuller.

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*).

Problems, etc: If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Anthony Fisher, Field Trips Committee Chair (510) 658-8769. Loveisant@aol.com.



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OUR BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON



*There is no December meeting
Plan to Participate in the
Christmas Bird Count*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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